

CLAIMS

WE CLAIM:

1. An oven comprising:
 - a heating housing defining an internal heating chamber that supplies heat to raw grease-emitting food product to produce prepared food product from the raw food product;
 - a drain disposed at a base of the heating housing in communication with the heating chamber;
 - a portable container placed in proximity to the drain, wherein the container defines an internal grease collection reservoir containing a fluid of sufficient amount to maintain at least a predetermined fluid level; and
 - a grease removal conduit connected to the drain at a first end, and in communication with the reservoir at a second end that extends below the predetermined fluid level, wherein the conduit receives grease emitted during heating of the food product and delivers the emitted grease to the container.
2. The oven as recited in claim 1, wherein the heating housing further includes a drip pan located above the drain and defining an opening in alignment with the drain.
3. The oven as recited in claim 2, wherein the drip pan is sloped towards the opening.
4. The oven as recited in claim 2, wherein the heating housing further comprises a second drain for the removal of non-grease condensation.
5. The oven as recited in claim 4, further comprising a valve disposed in the conduit that can be actuated to control fluid flow from the drain to the reservoir.
6. The oven as recited in claim 1, wherein the oven is sold under the trademark Combitherm®.

7. The oven as recited in claim 1, wherein the container further comprises a spout that delivers accumulated grease to a grease drainage site.

8. The oven as recited in claim 1, wherein the container further comprises a siphon tube that delivers accumulated grease to a grease drainage site.

9. The oven as recited in claim 1, further comprising a pump connected to first tubing that extends into the reservoir, and second tubing that extends to a grease drainage site, wherein the pump is operable to provide a force that delivers accumulated grease from the reservoir to the grease drainage site.

10. The oven as recited in claim 9, further comprising a sensor located in the reservoir that senses a fluid level and automatically disconnects the pump when a grease fluid level reaches the predetermined level.

11. A method for removing grease from an oven of the type that includes a heating housing defining an internal heating chamber that receives raw grease-emitting food product, the steps comprising:

- (A) supplying heat to the raw food product and producing a quantity of grease within the heating chamber;
- (B) directing the grease into a drain formed in the heating housing;
- (C) directing the grease from the opening into a conduit connected at a first end to the drain and having a second end extending into a reservoir;
- (D) emptying grease from the reservoir; and
- (E) preventing ambient air from entering the heating chamber through the drain during steps (A) through (E).

12. The method as recited in claim 11, wherein step (E) further comprises actuating a valve to seal the conduit.

13. The method as recited in claim 11, wherein step (E) further comprises maintaining a predetermined fluid level in the reservoir during step (A).

14. The method as recited in claim 13, further comprising sensing an actual fluid level in the reservoir and comparing the fluid level to the predetermined fluid level.

15. The method as recited in claim 11, wherein step (B) comprises installing a drip pan into the heating housing that defines an opening in alignment with the drain.

16. The method as recited in claim 15, wherein step (B) further comprises covering a second non-grease removing drain formed in the heating housing with the drip pan.

17. The method as recited in claim 11, wherein step (D) further comprises transporting the reservoir from the oven to a grease drainage location.

18. The method as recited in claim 11, wherein step (D) further comprises siphoning grease from the reservoir into a grease drainage location.

19. The method as recited in claim 11, wherein step (D) further comprises pumping grease from the reservoir into a grease drainage location.

20. The method as recited in claim 19, wherein step (D) further comprises sensing an actual grease level inside the reservoir and determining when grease is to be pumped.